

reinstated! God has forever slain the enemy which puts Jew and non-Jew at odds. All who are “in Messiah” are brothers and sisters in God’s family and therefore share equally in the bounty of His grace.

**17–18 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.**

Paul now summarizes the double theme he has emphasized in the previous verses. First is the peace that has been established between believing Jew and Gentile in the body of Messiah, the *ekklesia*. And second, is the wider scope encompassing all of humanity. For the peace between Jew and Gentile in the body of Messiah is a portend or foreshadow of the sure reality of God’s promise, that in the “Seed of the woman,” He would bless every family or nation on the earth. And as a result, all of humanity will be represented within the innumerable host of the redeemed, and Paul sees this as the final reconciliation between fallen mankind and God Who is the creator.

In this summary, Paul skillfully crafts words from two texts in Isaiah, 52:7a and 57:19.

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace ... (Is 52:7a)

I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners, creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near.” Says ADONAI, “and I will heal him.” (Is 57:18–19)

Paul applies the phrase from Is 52:7, “who announces peace,” to Yeshua, for the text in Isaiah portrays the beauty of the messenger who brings the “good news,” which Paul understands as the “Gospel.” The Greek word used in the Apostolic Scriptures for the Gospel as centered in the work of Yeshua is *εὐαγγέλιον* (*euangelion*), and the related verb, *εὐαγγελίζω* (*euangelizō*) is what Paul uses in our verse, translated “preached peace.” This is the same verb used by the Lxx to translate the phrase “announces peace” *πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου...εἰρήνης* (*podes euangelizomenou...eirēnē*), “the feet of *the one* announcing peace.” Given the fact that this Greek word became the common term to describe the Gospel, we can understand why, for Paul, the phrase means “the feet of the one proclaiming the Gospel *which brings* peace.” And such “Gospel” or “good news” can

only exist because of what Yeshua our Messiah has accomplished and continues to bring to pass, i.e., eternal salvation for all who are His.

Having used the line from Is 52:7 to emphasize that Yeshua Himself came in order to bring to fruition the “good news” of salvation, Paul then adds the line from Is 57:19 to summarize that the “good news” which flows from the person and work of Yeshua is both for those who are near, and those who are far off.

This very reality was modeled by Yeshua Himself when He gave the initial instructions to His disciples to go first to the lost sheep of Israel, that is, to those whom Isaiah and Paul characterize as “near.”

These twelve Yeshua sent out after instructing them: Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt 10:5–6)

Only after His death and resurrection, and before ascending back to the Father, did Yeshua commission His disciples to carry the Gospel to the nations, i.e., those whom Isaiah (prophetically) and Paul characterize as “far off.”

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matt 28:19–20)

As Calvin notes:

No reference to distance of place is conveyed by the words *afar off* and *nigh*. The Jews, in respect of the covenant, were *nigh* to God. The Gentiles, so long as they had no promise of salvation, were *afar off*—were banished from the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

Here we come to the heart of the Gospel which was preached to Abraham, namely, that all, Jew and Gentile alike, were under the wrath of God and worthy of eternal punishment, but through the abundant love of God in Yeshua, given to pay for our transgressions, we abide in full shalom with the Almighty. Compare Rom 5:1–2.

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Ephesians*, p. 240.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Yeshua Messiah, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Rom 5:1–2)

This is precisely the “peace,” the very subject of the “good news,” that Paul expresses here in Ephesians. The Gospel is “good news” because while there was enmity between Jew and Gentile, and in our fallen state all are “enemies” against God, through Yeshua we are no longer enemies fighting against God and therefore objects of His righteous wrath, but we have been brought into His very family as adopted sons and daughters, and therefore may always affirm that “we have peace with God through our Lord Yeshua Messiah.” As Paul has stated in v. 14, referring to Yeshua: “For He Himself is our peace.”

But how are we to understand Paul’s words when he writes that “He came and preached peace...?” When did Yeshua do this “preaching”? He did it even before His incarnation, for Peter tells us that the Spirit of Messiah was active within the minds of the prophets so that they would prophecy both the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow.

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Messiah within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow. (1Pet 1:10–11)

And further, He did so in His incarnation, His teaching as He walked upon the earth, and His words as carried forward by His apostles.

*for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.* – Here, as often in the Scriptures, we have the infinite oneness of God portrayed yet in the language of plurality. Yeshua, the Son of God, is the One by Whom our access to the Father has been secured. Yet this access is through the work of the Spirit, for it is by the Spirit that the believer is regenerated and enabled to grow in sanctification, which is the inevitable outcome of being regenerated.

Paul has previously referenced the glorious mystery of God’s oneness as revealed to us in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In 1:3 Paul offers the same blessing for the Father and the Lord Yeshua Messiah and follows in 1:14 by stating that believers have been given the Holy Spirit as the divine pledge of their salvation. Likewise, note 3:14–17 in which the

triune nature of our God is affirmed, for Paul “bows his knee before the Father,” asking on behalf of his readers that they would be “strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,” with the result that “Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” We see the same language in 4:4–6.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:4–6)

Note as well 5:18–20.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Yeshua Messiah to God, even the Father; (Eph 5:18–20)

This tri-unity of the one, true God, has for some within the Torah movement been a point of contention, for traditional Judaisms have accused the Christian Church of denying that there is only one true God when the Church holds a “trinity” doctrine. But the Scriptures, both Tanach and Apostolic, are clear about the fact that while there is one and only one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He has nonetheless revealed Himself in the plurality of Father, Son, and Spirit. Surely the One Whom Moses sees upon Mt. Sinai is God, yet He is seen as a man with feet.

Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank. (Ex 24:9–11)

Further, when Paul utilizes Is 45:23 in his words about Yeshua in Phil 2:5–11, he is making it amply clear that Yeshua is יהוה incarnate. The words of the prophet Isaiah are clearly describing יהוה.

I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. (Is 45:23)

Then, Phil 2:9–11, Paul ascribes what יהוה has declared of Himself to Yeshua.

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Yeshua EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Yeshua Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9–11)

The conclusion is obvious: the inspired word of God has proclaimed that Yeshua will be glorified by all, confessing that He is Lord (κύριος, *kurios*) and that such confession will be giving glory to God the Father. It is interesting to note that the phrase “every knee will bow” in Is 45:23 is followed in the next verse with the phrase “Only in יהוה are righteousness and strength,” with the Lxx having ἀπὸ κυρίου δικαιοθήσονται, “from the Lord (κύριος, *kurios*) is one declared righteous...” For Paul, in Phil 2:11, to declare that Yeshua Messiah “is Lord,” having just quoted Is 45:23, can only be taken to mean that Yeshua is Himself, in the mystery of it all, one with יהוה.

The specific application of this biblical truth to our verse in Ephesians is obvious: there is one and only one God, and therefore both Jew and Gentile have access to the One true God through the work of Messiah applied by the Ruach. The pagan idea that each nation must have their own “gods” and that therefore the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could only be the God of the Jews, is clearly shown to be completely contrary, both to how the Father has revealed Himself in the Son, and how the Spirit is the One by Whom both Jew and Gentile are given new life (regeneration) and united together in the body of Messiah.

Indeed, this was Peter’s point after he learned this important truth, for he reasoned that whether Jew or Gentile, both were given the same Spirit and thus both were equally members of the *ekklesia* through the specific work of God by His Spirit.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also...Then Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” (Acts 10:44–47)

Thus, the work of the Spirit in bringing the one “dead in trespasses and sin” to life in Messiah, and enabling the believer to grow in holiness and thus to become more and more like Yeshua, is that which is the experience of all true believers in Yeshua, whether Jew and non-Jew. Further, it is the evident working of the Ruach in the lives of all believers, Jew and non-Jew alike, that unites the body of Messiah together as a living testimony of Yeshua’s death, resurrection, and ascension as the true Savior and reigning King.

And in what realm is this reality to be lived out before a watching world? It is in the local communities of believers throughout the world, where Jew and non-Jew are recognized as coming together in unity to honor Yeshua as Savior and Lord, seeking the will of the Father, and to be energized and enabled by the Spirit to walk in the footsteps of Messiah. Those who seek to separate Jew and non-Jew within the Torah movement, regardless of their motives for doing so, are undermining a central aspect of the Gospel. For it is when the watching world sees Jew and Gentile walking in obedience to the whole of the Scriptures, caring for each other and rejoicing together in the shalom that has been won for them through the saving work of Yeshua, then the message of God’s salvation by faith in Yeshua is proclaimed in its fulness.

Finally, in this verse Paul emphasizes that all believers, Jew and non-Jew alike, “have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” The verb translated “have” is the Greek ἔχομεν (*examen*) which is a present tense verb, and emphasizes that this is something that is always available to us. As believers, we are “in Messiah” and this means in Him we always have access to the Father.

The word translated “access” (*προσαγωγή, prosagōgē*) is found in our verse and in 3:12. The only other time it is used is in Rom 5:2. Though used only these three times, the word pictures the right of a person to be welcomed into the very throne room of the King, and to do so at His request and therefore with confidence. But it is clear that such access is available only to those who have received Yeshua, for apart from Him and His work, there is no access to the Father. As Yeshua Himself proclaimed: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (Jn 14:6).

Here Paul may be directing his well chosen words toward those who were teaching that only through having “legal Jewish status” could a person have access to the God of Israel. This errant teaching went contrary to the very heart of the Gospel, that God intended to bless all the nations of the earth, not just those who had some form of “legal status within the nation of Israel. Indeed, Israel was chosen by God to be the

channel through whom the glorious message of the Gospel would be proclaimed to the nations.

**19–20 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yeshua Himself being the corner stone,**

In v. 12 of our chapter, Paul refers to the Gentile believers as formerly being “strangers to the covenants of the promise.” Here Paul adds the term “alien” (πάροικος, *paroikos*) to the word “strangers.” This word, linked with the term “strangers” (ξένος, *ksenos*), gives the picture of those in a given city or region who do not have full privileges or status when compared to those who are “fellow citizens” (συμπολίτης, *sumpolitēs*) or those of a “household” or “family” (οἰκεῖος, *oikeios*). Regarding these terms utilized by Paul, Thielman notes:

These four terms were commonly used in social and political contexts to refer to a particular group’s status, and ξένοι [*strangers*] and πάροικοι [*alien*] were frequently contrasted with πολῖται [*citizen*] or οἰκεῖοι [*household*]. Ancient lists of city residents, for example, ranked the privileges of full citizens (πολίται) first, resident aliens (πάροικοι or κάτοικοι, *katoikoi*) next, and transient foreigners (ξένοι) last.<sup>1</sup>

The status of all believers is that each one, regardless of people group identification, gender, economic status, etc., have equal access to the Father and are equally positioned as bone fide members of God’s household. As children of the King, no one can deny access to Him for those He has brought into His family through the blood of His Son, our Messiah, Yeshua, and the application of His grace to all who are His through the agency of the indwelling Ruach HaKodesh.

1 Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 179.